

## F.N.C.V. Excursion to Cann River District

26 Dec 1970 - 3 Jan 1971

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Note: Common names of plants have been used in this report, but the scientific names are listed at the end as indicated by the number following each name. This report and its attached list necessarily omit many plants seen during the trip.

Thirty-seven members boarded the chartered coach at Melbourne on Saturday morning 26 December and set out on the 300-mile journey to Cann River. The hot weather and after-Christmas lethargy caused many nodding heads but, after the long-desired lunch stop at Sale, all were sufficiently alert to appreciate the view as we topped the hill to look over Lakes Entrance.

While passing through the tiny settlement of Cabbagetree, somebody asked about Victoria's only palm but we could see no Cabbagetree Palms<sup>1</sup> anywhere. We have since learned that the palms are several miles away and cannot be seen from the Princes Highway.

We came into the township of Cann River at about 5.30 p.m.

### *To Tamboon Inlet, 27 December*

On this day and all subsequent days we were joined by three members who were camping in the area and by two members from the Bendigo FNC. Our party from Melbourne included a member of the Frankston FNC and a country member from Cope Cope. It was good to have these people from different clubs, and members of other affiliated clubs would also be welcomed at these excursions.

In spite of the heat, or perhaps because of it, we were all aboard the bus soon after 9 a.m. and set out due south for the head of Tamboon In-

let. The road went through forest all the way. The eucalypts consisted mostly of Silvertop<sup>2</sup>, White Stringybark<sup>3</sup> and Messmate Stringybark<sup>4</sup>. For those to whom all eucalypts are still simply "gum trees" the Saw Banksia<sup>5</sup> was readily recognisable and occurred in abundance. There is something very Australian about Saw Banksias. The immense number of fruit cones on these trees suggests that they flower in abundance but, probably, many of the fruits were years old. Some had a few large, silvery heads of flowers still at the bud stage.

After a few miles the bus stopped while we all rambled through a more open area. The first excitement was the Large Duck Orchid<sup>6</sup>. There were several patches of them. The quaint resemblance to flying ducks is enchanting and, when a touch on the "head" caused it to snap down into the "body", there was a chorus of surprised delight. The head of the duck is actually the labellum which, in most orchids, is towards the bottom of the flower; and the body of the duck consists of the broadly-flanged column which is usually towards the top. But some orchids have the whole flower turned upside-down, and the Duck Orchids are among them. The lightning movement of the duck's head into the body sweeps an insect that touches the head (i.e. the labellum) down to the column where it is trapped. Un-

able to escape but able to move about, the insect carries out its role in the pollination system of the flower. Presently the labellum is lifted to release the insect which, we hope, goes off to another Duck Orchid to continue its pollination service. The labellum is then ready to be triggered by the next insect that alights on it. But what it is that attracts an insect to that chocolate-brown head does not seem to be known.

Later we found the Small Duck Orchid. Other orchids included the Horned Orchid, Austral Leek Orchid, Large Tongue Orchid and the Furled Tongue Orchid which carries its flower vertically instead of more or less horizontally. Like Duck Orchids, the flowers of Leek Orchids and Tongue Orchids are inverted — the labellum is above the column.

We had enjoyed the soft colour of Blue Dampiera en route for it occurred in scattered patches by the roadside. It was plentiful at this stop too but was outshone by the Large Fan-flower. These flowers are 1"–1½" across with the five petals spread out on one side like a fan, so the common name could hardly be more apt. Some of them were a comparatively pale blue, some a mauve colour, and many were a wonderfully rich purple-blue.

There were several other flowers in the blue to purple range. There was the richly coloured Tufted Blue-lily, the Blue-spike Milkwort (the pink Heath Milkwort was there too and in much greater quantity), a low-growing mauve Fringed Lily and, at a later stop near a tiny stream, we came on several clumps of Fairies' Aprons. If these dainty little flowers were white instead of blue they would surely be called Ballerinas.

Of the many other plants at that

spot Golden Spray was probably the most spectacular. Along a swampy area bushes up to six feet high carried long sprays of yellow pea flowers. The pink Swamp Heath also flourished in that damp part. And the tall fruiting spikes of a Grass Tree dominated a drier area.

There were several small, spoked, jewel spiders here but a larger spider captured the attention of us all. It was about 1" long — the body striped black and yellow, the head grey. It was far too absorbed in feeding on a fly to be disturbed by cameras only 6" away or by an occasional thrust against the grass blades to which its web was attached. It was a St. Andrews Cross Spider.

At another stop we found great quantities of Wedding Bush. Some bushes were heavily loaded with ½" spiky balls, but others still had a few flowers. Members were interested to learn that male and female flowers are produced on different bushes. They observed the difference between the two flowers and were then a bit shaken when they found male flowers on a bush bearing the ball-like fruits! But plants have an awkward tendency to produce exceptions that confound the general rule.

At various places along the road were lovely sprays of Prickly Tea-tree or Manuka. This plant is so well-known and so widespread that we tend to overlook it in our eagerness to see less familiar things, but it is surely one of the attractive features of our bush — whether in far Gippsland or near-to-home Dandenongs. Or would this Gippsland species be the old *Leptospermum scoparium*?

Near Tambour Inlet we were met by a member of the club who was camping there. He joined us again the next day at Tonghi Creek.

We lunched under the shade of a dense grove of Swamp Paper-barks<sup>21</sup> on the estuary of Cann River before it enters Tamboon Inlet. We watched the launching of several pleasure craft and did not envy the occupants as they advanced out to the unshaded water. And later, when some of our party went swimming, their anguished entry (and return) on the muddy bottom of the first few yards consoled us that we were not with them.

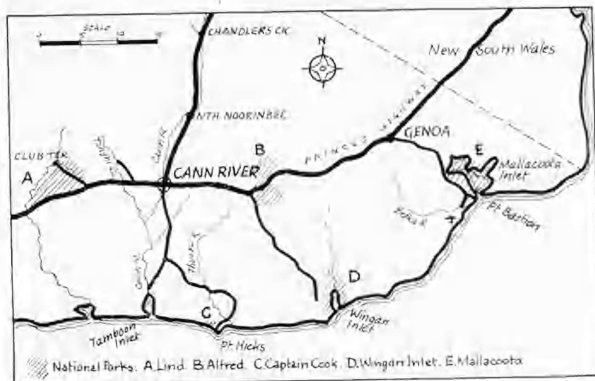
The protracted lunch time permitted individual rambles and provided some interesting observations. An Azure Kingfisher flashed in front of us; a 3-foot goanna was disturbed on the ground and promptly raced up a tree; a water-dragon raised itself with projecting elbows better to observe the interlopers; a large skink was lying on an ant-track so that the ants followed along the skink's tail and body to the head where they were smartly snapped up; and one member made a discovery we all went to see—Blue Olive-berry<sup>22</sup> in full flower. The 15-foot

tree could scarcely have crowded on any more flowers.

The flowers of Blue Olive-berry are the most charming imaginable— $\frac{1}{2}$ " white bells with a finely fringed edge—and here the little bells were hanging in hundreds in the cool shadow of the foliage. We were to see these flowers several times again but never in such astonishing abundance. If every one of those fairy-weight bells were fertilised and became a solid berry, we felt that the tree could hardly remain erect under the load. From later observation it would seem that many flowers are not fertilised so we can rest easy about that tree breaking!

#### To Tongli Falls, 28 December

Aboard our bus soon after 9 a.m. we went five or six miles along the highway westward to Tongli Creek Road. One of our members with a car took the bus driver to examine the road to the Falls. Apparently it resulted in an adverse report for, when they returned, we packed our



lunches into the car and walked. Later, the bus made it up the hill to our lunch spot, but we would have missed many interesting things had we missed that walk.

Again our route took us through forest, but a very different forest from yesterday. The eucalypts were mostly Mountain Grey Gum<sup>2</sup>, Swamp Gum<sup>2</sup>, White Stringybark again, and River Peppermint<sup>2</sup>.

There were extensive patches of the Derwent Speedwell<sup>2</sup> with its small white flowers gathered into long cone-shaped heads, and many flowers and plants familiar to us. A very interesting find was the Wombat Berry<sup>2</sup> in flower. The pendant  $\frac{1}{2}$ " flowers were a very pale mauve, the three inner perianth members were fringed, and the stamens formed a projecting yellow tube in the centre. During the week we found more of these climbers bearing the familiar  $\frac{3}{8}$ " orange balls, but few of us had seen the flowers before. Although the berries are far more conspicuous than the flowers, the latter would be hard to beat for delicacy of colour and form.

Further on we found the strikingly unusual flowers of Bearded Tylophora<sup>2</sup>. The  $\frac{1}{4}$ " plum-coloured flowers were hanging in loose clusters. The five pointed petals, edged with fine hairs, formed a very precise star. In the centre were small raised parts making a darker star; and in the centre of that was a tiny, blunt-pointed white star. This geometrical appearance recalled the flower of Hoya, and we discovered that they both belong to the family Asclepiadaceae. All members of this family have a complicated system of pollination—sometimes as involved as the pollination of orchids—and the inner stars of Tylophora are part of that system. At various places during the

week we saw more of these scrambling plants with their opposite leaves, but never again did we see the flowers.

A large goanna with zebra-striped legs attracted comments, and everyone stopped to look at an unusual moth. The wings were a bright light green and biscuit, the large areas of each colour being separated by a fine white line; the legs were very broad, and the body had a blunt, turned-up end. About  $1\frac{1}{4}$ " long, it was hanging motionless from a blade of grass.

The car had taken our lunches to a spot where the road met the creek. This S-bend of Tonghi Creek was chock-a-block with plants, large and small, and of wonderful variety. Muttonwood<sup>2</sup> carried its match-head size cream balls closely packed along the stems. Twiggy Heath-myrtle<sup>2</sup> crowded against the bridge with masses of  $\frac{3}{8}$ " white flowers, while Lilly-pilly<sup>2</sup> carried its nondescript flowers in large loose clusters, and another member of the myrtle family puzzled us for a while as it had neither flowers nor fruit. It was Kanooka<sup>2</sup>. In Victoria, Kanooka occurs only in east Gippsland but it continues into NSW and Queensland. There were many plants more readily recognised and it was interesting to see Sweet Pittosporum<sup>2</sup> in its natural habitat instead of as a suburban hedge.

Climbers seemed to be everywhere. Wonga Vine<sup>2</sup> displayed its large, creamy, red-throated bells. The tough, conspicuously-veined leaves of Smilax<sup>2</sup> were very noticeable and at last we came on clusters of the blue-black berries. Water Vine<sup>2</sup> was also easily recognised by its leaves—about 4" long in a palmate formation.

Masses of the small Rock Felttern<sup>2</sup> were growing on an old tree trunk—not on rocks. Who but the

knowledgeable would realise this was a fern? The "fronds" were quite unlike a fern for they had no pinnae and were simply circular plates about  $\frac{1}{4}$ " across and very thick. The fertile "fronds" were about the same width but up to  $1\frac{1}{2}$ " long and the undersides were covered with rust-red sori.

After lunch we all set out to walk the remaining one or two miles to the Tonghi Falls, but we departed at different times and at different speeds. The route took us through a farm, and Mrs. Morrison, wife of the farmer, led the first comers. Having no hesitation about the route, they moved away quite quickly and were lost to sight, so that many of the later ones got bushed and some never reached the Falls at all! Also, there was a bit of a hold-up soon after leaving the farm where the creek had to be forded. Many persons promptly removed shoes and socks, while the reluctant ones were finally lured over by the gallantry of two members who carried them across. This gallantry was extended not only to the ladies of the party.

There was a stiff climb over a couple of hills and we continued in private property where most of the timber had been removed. The long grass and weeds made us alert to possible snakes. In one of these clearings along the creek some members saw a pair of black duck. We re-joined the creek at the top of the Falls.

The Tonghi Falls consist of a series of cascades in a granite outcrop. Some of the boulders are up to 20 feet high.

Growing in the cracks of rocks alongside the Falls were several bushes of the Tonghi Bottlebrush<sup>4</sup>. They carried crimson brushes  $1\frac{1}{2}$ " to 3" long. Tonghi Creek is one of the

few places in Victoria where this *Callistemon* occurs, but it is less rare in NSW.

When clambering down the rocks, one member rested his hand on a piece of bark. The bark moved and from under it slithered a black snake. Another member picked up a piece of greenish-coloured quartzite. And another saw several water dragons in the area. Most of the dragons hurried into the water when he tried to get nearer but one was less nervous. Our naturalist approached cautiously — on his stomach. He took a photo at a distance of three feet; advanced some more and some more and finally got a shot from about twelve inches. At first the biscuit-coloured dragon was lying out flat to get all benefit from the sun, then it raised the front of the body with elbows outwards and watched the photographer crawling forward.

Returning from the Falls, Mrs. Morrison showed us where petrified wood could be found. Actually, a large "log" of petrified wood had been placed on an oil drum to ensure that we saw it, but we went to the Falls by a different route and did not find it until we returned. The log looked just like wood, but lifting one end was enough to convince me it was wood no longer. Mrs. Morrison said that, when first in the area, she sometimes went to pick up a piece of wood and realised it was far too heavy to serve as fuel! She gave members small pieces to take away. The following week when at home, one member cut and polished a piece of this petrified wood and put it under the microscope. It clearly showed the cellular structure of wood.

In the evening a member showed slides of marine specimens and of the progress of the Cardinia Dam. An-

other member showed slides of coastal plants.

### To Pt. Hicks, 29 December

Most of our bird enthusiasts were early risers, and this morning, a group went off at 6 o'clock with a timber worker to see a lyre-bird's nest in Lind National Park. On various mornings they came back with news of their early rambles. One member reported hearing a peculiar noise and found it was coming from a young Kookaburra. Perched alone on a bough, the youngster was trying to laugh. From a tree nearby the parent bird showed the proper way to do it and junior tried again. The result was still very odd—and very laugh-provoking to our observer.

On this pleasantly cool morning we followed the road towards Tamboon Inlet and, after about ten miles, took the left hand turning towards Pt. Hicks. We had an appointment with the lighthouse officers for 10.30 so we crossed the Thurra River without pausing but promised to stop there on our return.

We crossed the Thurra again at its estuary where there were several campers. About midway between the estuary and the lighthouse is the beginning of the Captain Cook National Park—only about 1½ miles in depth. Why more of this natural forest is not included in the Park is a mystery.

At the gate to the lighthouse enclosure we were met by a lighthouse officer in his jeep. We followed him along the narrow road to the group of houses clustered near the lighthouse at Pt. Hicks.

On getting out of the bus at Pt. Hicks, we discovered it was very windy and quite chilly so jackets and coats were hastily donned and securely buttoned. We all trooped

down the slope to the extensive flat rocks to see the monuments that commemorated the sighting and naming of Pt. Hicks by Captain Cook on 20 April, 1770.

We returned up the slope to the lighthouse, about 100 yards inland from the monument. In groups of ten, we climbed the 150 steps to the light where another pleasant officer met us, supplied loads of information and answered innumerable questions. One of our members came away with a souvenir—a 1000 watt lamp that had seen only three-quarters of its life. At that stage the lamp is replaced by a new one so as to minimise the chance of light failure and hasty emergency action. The prisms around the light magnify the power 1000 times.

One of the officers very kindly led us to a good beach within the lighthouse enclosure where we lunched and remained a couple of hours. Another returned at 3 p.m. and unlocked the gate. Our president spoke for us all when he expressed appreciation of the friendly, generous attention these officers had given us.

The broad expanse of flat rocks at Pt. Hicks where the monuments stand is well above sea level, and these granitic rocks continue down to the sea in boulders of various sizes. One member followed them out as far as the tide permitted but was disappointed to find so little marine life. There were no pools among the rocks and limpets seemed to be almost the only things that could stand the perpetual pounding.

The stretch of flat rocks carried spreading patches of plants that one might expect to see such as Angular Noonflower<sup>45</sup>, Sea Celery<sup>46</sup>, and a plant we did not expect to see—a small Lobelia. These plants formed low-

growing mats sprinkled with pale blue flowers. We decided it was probably Angled Lobelia<sup>14</sup> made prostrate by its windswept position.

At our lunch spot we found almost all the common coastal plants that had been shown on the slides the previous night, and it was interesting to see that Saw Banksia had given way to Coast Banksia<sup>15</sup>. We were surprised to find Lilly-pilly only twenty yards from the beach, and Water Parsnip<sup>16</sup> supplied a real novelty.

At this lunching place there was a strange track in the sand near the rocks. It was about 6' across with four pointed marks slightly dragged. Our marine people decided it was made by a crab. A Sooty Oystercatcher was active near these rocks and there were Crested Terns and Cormorants. In the bush behind the beach were many honeyeaters—the Yellow-winged and the Yellow-faced Honeyeater and the Little Wattlebird.

On the return journey we made several stops including the promised one at the upstream crossing of the Thurra River. This was a delightful spot and would be immensely appreciated on a hot day. There were widely spreading Kanookas, trails of Smilax and several bushes of Blue Olive-berry, one with pink flowers instead of white.

More stops revealed more treasures: Forked Sundew<sup>17</sup> with a surprisingly tall stem bearing a cluster of surprisingly large white flowers; the lovely, deep blue Tall Lobelia<sup>18</sup>; flowering bushes of Pink Boronia<sup>19</sup>; and the intriguing Bushy Club-moss<sup>20</sup>. This was about one foot high and almost every stem ended in a slender, creamy-green, male "cone". It looked like a miniature Christmas tree complete with candles. Con-

spicuous along several parts of the road were the tall, almost black heads of the Giant Sedge<sup>21</sup>. Many had orange-red seeds generously distributed along the 2-3 ft. dark spikes.

Now and again a wallaby was seen in the bush and a black one leapt across the road in front of the bus—to the combined shout of all who saw it. Rainbow Lorikeets screeched attention to their brilliant colours, while a Wedge-tail Eagle sailed high seemingly aloof to the world below it.

#### *Lind National Park, 30 December*

Our bus took us west along Princes Highway and turned off to the old highway into the Lind National Park. Shortly after entering the Park we all got out of the bus and walked up the old highway with the valley of the Euchre Creek on our right. The drop from the road to the creek was steep and densely covered with vegetation in jungle-like profusion; we never saw the water of the Euchre except where other little creeks crossed under the road to join it.

There were many familiar plants here, some less familiar, and the ferns by the roadside were particularly striking. There were delightful stretches of Fan Fern<sup>22</sup>, sometimes Coral Fern<sup>23</sup>, and continually Gristle Fern<sup>24</sup> and the light green fronds of Rainbow Fern<sup>25</sup> in association with Bracken<sup>26</sup>.

Again we saw several trees of Blue Olive-berry, some with white flowers, some with pale pink flowers, and one with berries. Attractive as the berries are, the flowers are so charming and unusual that we feel they should be acknowledged in the common name. We called them Fringed Bells.

We had learned to recognise the Water Vine by its palmate leaves and here it was carrying clusters of

flower buds. Wonga Vine was there too but we found no flowers.

The Golden Everlastings<sup>27</sup> were attractive roadside features at the less ferny northern end, and just south of Club Terrace we found flowers of the Dusky Coral Pea<sup>28</sup>. The large pea flowers recall Sturt's Desert Pea but, as the common name suggests, the colour of Dusky Coral Pea is a muted red rather than a bright red.

All along the road our bird observers found much to interest them. There were Gang Gangs, Black Cockatoos, Dusky Woodswallows, Leaden Flycatcher, a female King Parrot, Rufus Fantails, and a young Rufus Whistler. One member watched a strangely selective incident. A young Grey Thrush was making a lot of noise which had gathered several female Thrushes and a female Golden Whistler. It is known to bird observers that a crying baby bird often draws the attention of some adult females but here an unusual thing happened. A young Cuckoo arrived and it was chased away. Was it chased away because it was a cuckoo or because it was young? The latter seems the more likely reason but even that seems strange.

We lunched at Olive Branch Creek where the bus had followed up with our food. We boarded the bus again at Club Terrace and arrived back at Cann River comparatively early but only just before heavy rain.

There were slides again this evening, slides of a holiday in New Zealand. Mr. Cliff Bueglehole was a very welcome visitor, but the plant enthusiasts had the poor man identifying specimens right up to midnight! Not that I think he minded, and the botanists were most appreciative of his help.

To Malla-coota, 31 December

We set out eastwards along the Princes Highway to Genoa and then turned off south-east for Malla-coota.

We noted the jungle-like growth as we passed through the Alfred National Park and wished we had somebody who knew the place and could take us investigating there. But, no such person being available, we consoled ourselves with thoughts of the leeches to which we would *not* be acting as blood donors.

A couple of miles before Genoa we were met by two club members who guided us to a good botanical area just north of the highway. Right by the roadside were tall spikes of Golden Spray, and further in were bushes of Crimson Bottle-brush<sup>29</sup> in full bloom, Wiry Baurea<sup>30</sup>, and both Burgan<sup>31</sup> and White Kunzea<sup>32</sup>. There were several other flowers here including lovely clumps of the now very familiar Blue Dampiera and Large Fan-flower, an Onion Orchid<sup>33</sup> and some Large Tongue Orchids.

Another stop just before entering Genoa gave us a chance to put our glasses on some extensive ponds. There were Swans with cygnets, Black Duck, Spur-wing Plovers, White-faced Herons, and a wheeling flock of 20 to 30 Ibis, both White and Straw-necked.

The road from Genoa to Malla-coota took us through forest similar to that seen on previous days when we travelled south, but here there was the addition of Bloodwoods<sup>34</sup>, recognised by their tessellated bark.

Malla-coota Inlet is certainly a lovely spot.

Mr. A. B. Peisley, a country member of the FNCV, met us at Malla-coota and, after the food shops



had received our patronage, he led us to Betka River. The bus was parked among Swamp Paperbarks and we walked across the bridge to lunch on the ocean beach a few hundred yards further on. En route we found several Gum Myrtles<sup>66</sup>, Victoria's only Angophora. They looked just like eucalypts but some of these Gum Myrtles had flower buds and we could see they lacked the little cap to the bud which is the main distinguishing feature of the eucalypts.

On one of the eucalypts a Mistletoe<sup>67</sup> carried orangy-yellow flowers 1½" to 2" long. But what caused even more interest than the handsome flowers was the presence of another mistletoe growing on it. The hunter hunted! The buds and stems of the second mistletoe were covered with hairs forming a sort of yellow felt. This was the Golden Mistletoe<sup>68</sup>. Although the Golden Mistletoe occurs in NSW and Queensland, in Victoria it is confined to the Mallacoota area. It is always parasitic on another mistletoe, and usually on a member of the genus *Dendrophthoe* as in this case.

At the rocks near our lunching spot there was a basalt intrusion through the strata. Some of the rocks had fantastic formations and shapes. But again, as at Pt. Hicks, marine life was practically non-existent.

After lunch our party divided. Many members took advantage of the several cars to go to the heathlands near the aerodrome, while others stayed to bird-watch or to walk along the beach.

At the aerodrome heathlands the thickets of Southern Mahogany<sup>69</sup> drew our attention. Although Mahoganies are not large trees, here they were dwarfed and growing like Mal-

lees, low and many-trunked. Two plants caused excitement for they were new to almost all of us: Blue Howittia<sup>70</sup> and the procumbent Lilac Lily<sup>71</sup>. But these names did not coincide with our interpretation of colour! The ½" flowers of Blue Howittia were a mauve-pink rather than blue, and those of Lilac Lily were pale pink! Orchids included the Large Tongue Orchid, Horned Orchid and the Hyacinth Orchid<sup>72</sup>. The Hyacinth Orchid has no leaves and must get its food in an unusual way. It is probably saprophytic on humus in the soil, but its roots are often near the roots of a eucalypt to which, perhaps, it is connected by a fungus, thus drawing some of its food by a sort of secondary parasitism.

Three o'clock found us all in the bus again bound for Bastion Point to do some rock-pool hunting while the tide receded. But the tide was still rather high and there was little of interest to the marine enthusiasts. Also, the strata of the rocks were tilted almost vertical and made walking distinctly difficult. From Pt. Bastion one looks inland to the narrow entrance to Mallacoota Inlet.

We arrived back at Cann River soon after 5.30 p.m. Our social committee promptly got busy and remained busy right up to 9 p.m. in preparation for the New Year party.

The highlight of the party was the competition "natural arrangements". Actually they were most unnatural, very amusing and extraordinarily varied. They ranged from a large nestling made from sponge gathered on the beach to a small echidna of a weather-worn but still spiky Banksia cone. An enjoyable evening ended with the greeting of the New Year and singing "Auld Lang Syne".

Our bus took us about ten miles eastward along the highway and turned south along the road leading to Wingan Inlet. It was a rough road and the bus went only as far as advised—to the turn-off at the Gateshill Track three or four miles from the coast. At this turn-off were huge Silvertop trees, seemingly in the process of being harvested.

At the turn-off various people went various ways. Many took their lunches and continued along the very rough "road" to Wingan National Park and Wingan Inlet. Some, also with lunches, took the Gateshill Track towards the Elusive Lakes. Others, reluctant to carry lunches, walked a couple of miles along one or other of these routes and returned to the bus for a meal.

We all saw the Giant Trigger-plant for it was fairly plentiful on both routes and those persons who missed observing it were urged to come and look at this astonishing thing. The young plants resembled introduced pine tree seedlings, but the bigger ones branched several times and at the end of each branch was an inflorescence 8" to 12" long. Most of them carried fruit but there were enough flowers to convince us they really were trigger plants. The majority of these plants were three or four feet high but a few went up to six feet. Writing in *"The Age"* some time ago, Mr. Norman Wakefield says that the Giant Trigger-plant rarely lives more than two years. He says that, after the first flowers have died, four more shoots grow out from the top of the stem, each shoot bearing a panicle of flowers. If the plant lives to another season each of those four branches produces another four branches.

Along the Wingan road the rapid

changes of vegetation were a bit bewildering. Dropping into a slight gully we would find Blanket-leaf and other moisture-loving plants while on the hill only a hundred yards away was Saw Banksia! Further on we found Hill Banksia and more of our beloved Fringed Bells, but several of these warranted the usual common name of Blue Olive-berry. There were lovely spreading bushes of Pink Boronia. The Narrow-leaf Geebung was in flower, some had green berries, and the inner bark of the slender trunks roused interest—paper-thin layers of a bright rust-red colour, almost scarlet.

Stayers on the Wingan route were delighted to find the Lilac Lily again. This time the flowers were  $\frac{1}{2}$ " to 1" across and mauve rather than the pale pink of yesterday. Towards the Inlet were huge Yellow Stringybarks mixed with Bloodwoods. Very dark butterflies fluttered round the walkers but nobody knew what they were.

The track alongside the Inlet was marshy and continued right to the sea. About 200 yards out beyond the entrance to Wingan Inlet are "The Skerries", an irregular row of granite rocks. A colony of seals was at one end of low rocks and a colony of cormorants on higher rocks at the other end. As one member succinctly remarked "the colony of cormorants has obviously been there for very many years".

Those who followed the Gateshill road towards the Elusive Lakes walked five or six miles but never arrived at any lake. At the crest of each rise they saw the lakes ahead through the trees but, arrived at the next crest, the lakes were still beyond them. Did our walkers follow the wrong road? Are the lakes only of seasonal occurrence? Or has

the name been given to the mirages which, perhaps, are characteristic of that locality? Those people would certainly like to know.

The seekers of the Elusive Lakes disturbed the domestic duties of a pair of Spotted Pardolotes. The group was having lunch on a bank by the road when the pardolotes appeared on a nearby Geebung. Each had something in its beak and remained on the bush or fluttered near it and watched the munching Field Nats. Observing the birds observing them, the group decided they ought to move. The birds promptly flew down to the bank to a nesting tunnel that had been hidden by logs!

All parties from all routes were back at the bus by 4 o'clock and we returned over the rough road to Cann River.

That evening we observed an elusive lake of our own—and without walking half a dozen miles. Looking out the back window from the first floor of the hotel, we saw the valley a few hundred yards away covered with mist. The mist was low and flat, not at all furry, and looked just as water looks at twilight. There seemed to be no mist anywhere else.

#### *Cann Valley Highway, 2 January*

Our bus took us along the Cann Valley Highway going north. Just out of the township of Cann River we stopped to ramble in the small local reserve. There were many interesting plants in the reserve but it was much overgrown with blackberry, and it was difficult to understand why everything had been cleared to leave a ten-yard bare strip each side of the river. A tumbled-down old shack was interesting because of the thick slabs of stringybark used for the walls.

Bushes of blueish foliage with square stems made us aware of the presence of Blue Gums<sup>7</sup>. There were Blackwoods<sup>8</sup> and Black Wattles<sup>9</sup>, and hanging from a Lilly-pilly were "three climbers in one tangle" as a member expressed it. One of the climbers was Smilax, another was Wombat Berry with both flowers and green (not yet orange) berries, and the third we thought to be a species of Marsdenia. Clematis<sup>10</sup> made a fourth climber and it was covered with its feathery fruits.

There were several Rufus Fantails flying nearby and one was found on a nest. There were butterflies galore, though far outnumbered by the flies. The butterflies were Common Browns and they were almost all males. We were told that these were probably the first hatching; the next hatching would include many more females, while a third hatching would consist mostly of males again.

Leaving the reserve, our route followed the Cann River. At first it was some distance away to our left and the river flats were under pasture. These pasture lands with the hills behind made an attractive rural scene. Approaching the hills we crossed the river and followed it closely, the river then being on our right. As we went further north the river banks became steeper and, further up, the water formed tumbling cascades over grey rocks of gneissic nature.

Soon after entering the hills a cutting along the highway drew the attention of the geologists. It was mostly granitic rock with the associated aureole. Gneiss and a vein of yellowish-green rock were discovered. Meantime somebody had observed a White-naped Honeyeater feeding young in the nest.

We went as far north as Chandlers Creek where we lunched—all of us under one huge Blackwood. There it was that Mr. Archie May found us. On the way we had left a letter at his house to which we now returned. Several tall and handsome Blue Gums edged the side road that led to Mr. May's house.

Mr. May has a remarkable collection of moths, butterflies, phasmids and beetles, and outside he has a walled pond and island with tortoises, goldfish and several lizards. A small water-dragon on the roof apparently defied such enclosure.

Mr. May was about to lead us to an area where the Black-stem Maiden-hair<sup>2</sup> is plentiful when the heavens opened and we received our only heavy rain at daytime. It poured and hailed. Fortunately we were all in the bus and moving off. Unfortunately, water got into the engine and brought us to a halt. Our driver managed to remedy the matter while several members braved the down-pour and went out to see the orchid collection of Mr. May's nearby neighbour. Fearing further engine trouble and the rain continuing, the majority decided with the bus driver to return to Cann River. A few enthusiasts transferred to Mr. May's car.

The car turned off the highway and, after crossing a small bridge, the occupants got out to slither and weave their way between, under and over dripping vegetation to the Black-stem Maidenhair. There was quite a lot of it, and the property owner picked some fronds to be taken back to the hotel.

#### *Return to Melbourne. 3 January*

The grey weather moderated our regret as we departed for home soon after 9 a.m. Unfortunately, we left two members behind with a gastric

complaint. Two other sufferers faced the long journey home, a journey made even longer by the witnessing of an accident near Drouin. And next day, two more members went down with the same complaint! All attributed it to the water at Cann River. At least we can be grateful that the trouble did not occur earlier and impair the enjoyment of the daily trips.

Instead of going via Lakes Entrance we took the more northerly route through Bruthen and stopped at Stony Creek to find Ladies Tresses<sup>2</sup>. These are sometimes called Spiral Orchids because of the spiral arrangement of the closely-packed flowers up the stem. We lunched at Bairnsdale and came into Melbourne about 6 p.m.

Everybody who went on this trip had a thoroughly good time and they join me to thank our excursion secretary, Marie Allender. Miss Allender plans such a trip months ahead, contacts local and other naturalists, makes our bookings and sees to many other things. Well before all arrangements are complete for one trip, plans for another are forming in her mind. And the monthly day excursions also keep her busy. We are indeed lucky to have such a competent and enthusiastic person as excursion secretary. Also, we think that Marie has some sort of pull with the clerk of weather. We went to one of the wettest places in Victoria but, while Melbourne endured rain day and night to total 4½ inches, we had sunny days and most of our rain fell at night. Some very heavy showers during our return to Melbourne emphasised our good luck—or Marie's pull with that clerk. Thank you Marie Allender for a happy, carefree, naturalist-rich ten days—and for the good weather!

Botanical names of the plants that are mentioned in the foregoing account:

1. Cabbagetree Palm, *Livistonia australis*.
2. Silvertop, *Eucalyptus sieberi*.
3. White Stringybark, *Eucalyptus globoidea*.
4. Messmate Stringybark, *Eucalyptus obliqua*.
5. Saw Banksia, *Banksia serrata*.
6. Large Duck Orchid, *Caleana major*.
7. Small Duck Orchid, *Caleana minor*.
8. Horned Orchid, *Orthoceras strictum*.
9. Austral Leek Orchid, *Prasophyllum australe*.
10. Large Tongue Orchid, *Cryptostylis subulata*.
11. Furred Tongue Orchid, *Cryptostylis hunteriana*.
12. Blue Dampiera, *Dampiera stricta*.
13. Large Fan-flower, *Scaevola ramosissima*.
14. Tufted Blue-lily, *Stypandra caespitosa*.
15. Blue-spike Milkwort, *Comesperma calymega*.
16. Heath Milkwort, *Comesperma ericinum*.
17. Fringed Lily, *Thysanotus junceifolius*.
18. Fairies' Aprons, *Utricularia dichotoma*.
19. Golden Spray, *Viminaria juncea*.
20. Swamp Heath, *Sprengelia incarnata*.
21. Grass Tree, *Xanthorrhoea resinosa*.
22. Wedding Bush, *Ricinocarpus pinifolius*.
23. Prickly Tea-tree or Manuka, *Leptospermum juniperinum*.
24. Swamp Paper-bark, *Melaleuca ericifolia*.
25. Blue Olive-berry or Fringed Bells, *Elaeocarpus reticulatus*.
26. Mountain Grey Gum, *Eucalyptus cytellocarpa*.
27. Swamp Gum, *Eucalyptus ovata*.
28. River Peppermint, *Eucalyptus andreana*.
29. Derwent Speedwell, *Veronica derwentia*.
30. Wombat Berry, *Eustrephus latifolius*.
31. Bearded Tylophora, *Tylophora barbata*.
32. Muttonwood, *Rapanea howittiana*.
33. Twiggy Heath-myrtle, *Baeckea virgata*.
34. Lilly-pilly, *Eugenia (Acmena?) smithii*.
35. Kanooka, *Tristania laurina*.
36. Sweet Pittosporum, *Pittosporum undulatum*.
37. Wonga Vine, *Pandorea pandorana*.
38. Smilax, *Smilax australis*.
39. Water Vine, *Cissus hypoglauca*.
40. Rock Felt-fern, *Pyrosia rupestris*.
41. Tonghi Bottlebrush, *Callistemon subulatus*.
42. Angular Noonflower, *Carpobrotus roxi*.
43. Sea Celery, *Aplium prostratum*.
44. Angled Lobelia, *Lobelia alata*.
45. Coast Banksia, *Banksia integrifolia*.
46. Water Parsnip, *Sium latifolium*.
47. Forked Sundew, *Drosera binata*.
48. Tall Lobelia, *Lobelia gibbosa*.
49. Pink Boronia, *Boronia muelleri*.
50. Bushy Club-moss, *Lycopodium deuterodensum*.
51. Giant Sedge, *Guhnia clarki*.
52. Fan Fern, *Sticherus lobatus*.
53. Coral Fern, *Gleichenia microphylla*.
54. Gristle Fern, *Blechnum cartilagineum*.
55. Rainbow Fern, *Coleium dubia*.
56. Bracken, *Pteridium esculentum*.
57. Golden Everlasting, *Helichrysum bracteatum*.
58. Dusky Coral-pea, *Kennedyia rubicunda*.
59. Crimson Bottlebrush, *Callistemon citrinus*.
60. Wiry Baueraea, *Bauera rubioides*.
61. Burgan, *Leptospermum ericoides*.
62. White Kunzea, *Kunzea ambigua*.
63. Onion Orchid, *Microtis unifolia*.
64. Bloodwood, *Eucalyptus gunnifera*.
65. Gum Myrtle, *Angophora floribunda*.
66. Mistletoe, *Dendrophthe* sp.
67. Golden Mistletoe, *Notothixos subaureous*.
68. Southern Mahogany, *Eucalyptus botryoides*.
69. Blue Howittia, *Howittia trilocularis*.
70. Lilac Lily, *Scheuchzeria undulata*.
71. Hyacinth Orchid, *Dipodium punctatum*.
72. Giant Trigger-plant, *Styliidium loricifolium*.
73. Blanket-leaf, *Bedfordia salicina*.
74. Hill Banksia, *Banksia spinulosa*.
75. Narrow-leaf Geebung, *Persoonia linearis*.
76. Yellow Stringybark, *Eucalyptus muelleriana*.
77. Blue Gum, *Eucalyptus bivostata*.
78. Blackwood, *Acacia melanoxylon*.
79. Black Wattle, *Acacia mearnsii*.
80. Clematis, *Clematis aristata*.
81. Black-stem Maidenhair, *Adiantum formosum*.
82. Ladies Tresses, *Spiranthes sinensis*.